

Artists Participating in the “Art In This Present Moment” Initiative

American Indian Community Housing Organization (AICHO)

Concept: Artists will paint a mural that aims to bring color and life to a community resource center in Duluth’s Lincoln Park neighborhood, utilizing Anishinaabe symbolism to shed light on the city’s Indigenous history. The mural serves as a reminder that even in uncertain times, we shouldn’t forget the stories of the land we reside on and the people who were the first stewards of the Title Island.

Moira Villard is a dynamic visual artist, Fond du Lac Band of Ojibwe direct descendent and Minnesota-based community organizer. She displays a high degree of proficiency in a variety of artistic genres, including portraiture, illustration, graphic and digital design and murals. Moira has also worked as a curator and arts educator concentrating on equity and justice issues including art access, creative placemaking, environmental sustainability, youth empowerment, acknowledgment of Indigenous land, culture and history.

Michelle Defoe, from Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe, is an Indigenous artist working toward revitalizing Anishinaabe traditional arts, using forms including beadwork, moccasin making, birch bark baskets, sewing blankets and ribbon skirts. She is also a painter whose work is inspired by dreams and cultural background. Her goal as an artist is to create social change and have a positive impact on her community.

BROWNBODY

Concept: Couple **Thomasina Petrus** and **Charles Petrus**, and composer, **Alex Shaw**, are continuing to develop the score to Tracing Sacred Steps, which Brownbody initially presented in April 2019 as a “works-in-progress.”

CATALYST ARTS

Concept: A collaborative on a Black/queer living & cultural experience in an RV exploring sustainable + unique ways of living and traveling while following their acting, writing, filmmaking dreams. The artists’ journey will be documented through video and photos.

Adja Gildersleve (pronoun: Adja) is a filmmaker, photographer, and educator based in Minneapolis. Adja spent years as an organizer and agitator on the frontlines and is currently centering their passion and using media as a tool for liberation. Adja is committed to fighting oppression by any means necessary and including practices that lead to becoming a healthy elder.

Ashembaga Jaafaru (she/her) is a first generation Nigerian with credits that includes various plays at Hamline University, Making Waves: Hamline University Social Justice Theatre Troupe, Penumbra Theatre (Summer Institute), Eugene O'Neill Center (National Theatre Institute), and MN Fringe Festival productions. Her favorite methodologies for theatre stem from the techniques/practices of Augusto Boal and Paulo Freire with pedagogy and theatre of the oppressed. She strongly believes in art for social change.

DON'T YOU FEEL IT TOO?

Concept: The three artists will create inter-related work that builds community through practice of movement, conversation, and personal transformation. This iterative process of creativity and healing will start by embracing questions such as “What does it mean to be BIPOC?” “How can we create a healing practice with music?” and “What is professional development as an artist today?” The movement’s work is available to the public now. [Visit DYFIT's website](#) for more information.

Demetrius McClendon, who also goes by ImagineJoy, began dancing hip-hop at the age of 15. They have traveled nationally and internationally as a professional concert dancer/choreographer sharing their love and passion for the arts. Believing wholeheartedly in the power of loving action, radical imagination, and spiritual practice, they co-create with others to heal and empower Queer & BIPOC communities.

Xiaolu Wang was born a few hours before her favorite author, 三毛 (San Mao), died by suicide. She was raised by her grandparents 王玉明和吕凤英, until the biggest transition of her life, the one she is in now. She remembers loss more than time, senses lies more than her needs. She gets better at escaping growing up, through literature, music, and films. Her work deals with the romanticization of guilt, dust, and intimate vengeance.

Heather Peebles is an interdisciplinary artist processing intergenerational trauma by reconnecting to their body and spirit. With the intent to heal and a vision toward liberation, they do internal work through a personal practice of writing, movement, music, and ancestral research.

GIZHIIGIN ARTS INCUBATOR

Concept: Born and raised in the White Earth Nation, Clyde and Kent Estey grew up in a family where black-ash basketry, beading, sewing and birch-bark artistry were everyday occurrences. Both artists live in the Naytahwaush community. These artists will collaborate on a work reflective of their shared artistic upbringing.

Clyde Estey, Jr. is a third-generation basket maker carrying forward the Ojibwe tradition of Black Ash basketry.

Kent Estey's preferred artform is painting on canvas and he lives in the Naytahwaush community.

INDIGENOUS ROOTS

Concept: City Mischief Murals in collaboration with Indigenous Roots is creating a mural celebrating four Twin Cities multicultural women dancers, Mary Anne Quiroz (Mexika Aztec), Holly Henning (Anishinaabe), Djenane Saint-Juste (Haitian) and Sghne Xgino (Hmong). The large-scale mural will be located on the corner of Arcade & E 7th street in Saint Paul. All the women will be painted in their traditional regalia, showing them standing in unity, representing various cultures & traditions. Their goal is to create a mural that reflects the strength, beauty & power we hold when uniting our communities together.

Thomasina Topbear is a self-taught Indigenous muralist. She is a member of an international all-female art crew Few & Far Women and recently helped form an all-BIPOC art collective City Mischief Murals. Thomasina has organized a number of local and national community-based mural events focusing on youth, women & indigenous artists. She draws influences from her Dakota/Lakota culture, graffiti and uses her murals to express her feelings on community, social justice, culture, feminism and togetherness.

Joy Spika is a dedicated youth worker, teaching artist, muralist and musician. She is a practicing artist who has been engaging with both youth and emerging Twin Cities artists since receiving her BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Joy is passionate about working with young people who want to explore the possibilities of what the arts has to offer them and hopes to help elevate the experiences of the community.

Holly (Miskitoos) Henning is an active indigenous visual artist and has been a part of several community based events throughout the United States, Canada, Africa and Mexico. Holly uses traditional beadwork, birch bark biting, acrylics, aerosol, airbrush and traditional dance as a personal and political tool to address, explore and portray contemporary indigenous struggle. Holly is Marten Falls First Nations, Constance Lake First Nations Cree and Ojibwe.

Charles (Wanisin) Garcia visual artist and photographer. His artwork and photography examine social and political issues such as; the criminalization of immigrants and indigenous populations; urban life, self-identity and the realities of our communities in which we struggle to thrive.

Student Artists: Simone Tinker, AJ Kimble and Cheyenne Gill

MILLION ARTIST MOVEMENT

Concept: The Million Artist Movement is working on two collaborative projects – one is a quilt and the other is a project based on food sovereignty.

PROJECT #1 - Preparation and Interconnectedness (PI) Growers Collective

A collective group of cultural workers who share a commitment to support each other cooperatively and cultivate deeper relationships with food sovereignty. Using their collective experiences as organizers, they harness principles of solidarity (((and mutual aid))) to share resources and knowledge. As urban gardeners they aim to grow as much food and medicine for our families and communities as possible.

Stephanie Watts is a multi-disciplined visual artist currently living in the Twin Cities. She is a filmmaker, musician, photographer, painter, family historian and food producer. This year she has turned her attention towards growing food with the Preparedness and Interconnectedness Growers Collective to provide food security for their collective and for people in their surrounding community.

Alejandra C. (Tobar Alatriz) is a descendant of Mexicanxs y Chilenxs. She is a queer, light-skinned immigrant storyteller, bodyworker, arts organizer and healing justice practitioner. She centers her studies in arts, leadership and the human body at every scale. Over the last two decades, Alejandra has performed, directed and/or choreographed work at many venues in the Twin Cities, Minnesota region and is now at home with Indigenous Roots Cultural Arts collective.

Malia Araki Burkhart (she/her) is a Japanese-American and German/English American multimedia artist. She was raised in a suburb of Minneapolis and specializes in puppetry, dance, music and poetry, and loves exploring new forms of expression. Malia works as an activist-organizer in areas of environmental justice, food justice and healing justice. She is a Community Artist, arts educator, somatic therapist, mother of a small child and urban farmer.

Marie Michael grew up in New Mexico an only child, avid reader and perpetual journal writer. Being in the desert in close proximity to the Rocky Mountains, she grew to love open spaces, big sky and the brown curves of mother earth. Now, she lives in the Midwest where she serves as a coach and facilitator, teaching transformation of self, systems and communities.

Mankwe Ndotsi is a culture worker, using creative practice to nurture community, ancestors and the earth. She is part of a field of artists embedding creative practice into civic work. Her efforts have included interdisciplinary performance, arts-rooted community gatherings, active racial equity workshops with city housing inspectors, great black music series, and developing group healing workshops to support personal transformation from the inside out.

Miré Regulus is a Minneapolis-based multidisciplinary community builder and parent. In both her creative projects and food-justice work, she is interested in how we form engaged community and the unique ways we figure out how to take care of each other. She lives and

works at the intersection of the BIPOC, queer, political and artistic communities seeking to build a more equitable and embodied world.

Signe V. Harriday is a director, multidisciplinary artist and activist using theatre as a catalyst to ask questions about who we are and who we are in relation to others. She is co-founder of MaMa mOsAiC, a women of color theater company whose mission is to evoke positive social change through female-centered work. She is also co-founder of Million Artist Movement, a collective of artists committed to Black liberation, and co-founder of the Subversive Sirens, an award-winning synchronized swimming team committed to Black liberation, queer visibility, equity in aquatics, and radical body acceptance. She is an associate company member of Pillsbury House Theatre.

PROJECT #2 - Power Tree Quilting

The Power Tree quilt was imagined out of the need to bring together and recognize the many powerful initiatives working for the liberation of Black people around the world. It embodies the extensive power we the people have to resist, rise up, celebrate, honor, dismantle, revolt, imagine, and build together.

Stationed at the vigil/memorial site where community has been regularly gathering since the murder of George Floyd, artists have worked in and with community to process some of the trauma and grief through conversation and quilt square making. More than 250 individuals and families have contributed to more than 300 square feet of Power Tree Quilt.

Laura Mann Hill is a Minneapolis based theatre artist, director, arts educator and administrator. After nearly a decade of teaching and directing art programming in New York City public schools, she returned to the Twin Cities to join Making Waves: Hamline University's Social Justice Theatre Troupe as the Assistant Director. Laura also worked as a teaching artist and administrator with the Children's Theatre Company (CTC) engaging with communities through the nationally recognized Neighborhood Bridges Program. In addition, Laura is an arts organizer in the Twin Cities, using art for social change with various community and arts-based organizations. Laura is passionate about creating art with youth and facilitating intergenerational art spaces that engage with Black, Indigenous and communities of color.

Paige Reynolds (she/they) is an artist based in the Twin Cities, where she is a theatre maker, and relationship marketing associate at Minnesota Opera. Paige is also a lead organizer with Million Artist Movement. Their work is guided by a deep commitment to Black liberation and co-creating with her ancestors. Recent projects include devising multidisciplinary theatre and creative consulting with LOFTrecital; a teaching artist with Neighbor Bridges critical literacy program and; completing artEquity training and joining their national cohort of art practitioners facilitating around EDI issues. Paige holds a BFA in theatre arts administration from Howard University.

Donald Thomas is an artist and designer born in St. Paul on the land of the Dakota peoples, based in the Twin Cities. He creates mixed-media art installations called Affirmation Mirrors comprised mostly of fabric wrapped wood, yarn, mirrors, and beads. Donald also create murals, digital illustrations, design digital and print materials for artists and organizations, and works as a teaching artist. His art and design explore the themes of nature from the micro to the cosmic, healing trauma, time, portals, repetitive geometry, setting intentions for affirmations, asking questions, symbols, and identity exploration.

Harry Waters, Jr. is best known for his portrayal of Marvin Berry in *Back to the Future* (1985) which earned him a Gold record for his rendition of "Earth Angel." His acting credits also include numerous television guest-starring roles. He attended Princeton University and received his MFA in Directing from University of Wisconsin-Madison. As an actor, he has appeared in numerous venues around the country and Twin Cities including The Guthrie, Penumbra Theater Company, Mixed Blood, Ten Thousand Things Theater, Pangea World Theatre, Park Square, Frank Theatre, and Pillsbury House + Theatre. He is currently the professor and former chair of the Theater and Dance Department at Macalester College. Harry was also recently named the school's new Associate Dean in the Kofi Annan Institute for Global Citizenship.

MONKEYBEAR'S HARMOLODIC WORKSHOP

Concept: Artists will be creating a shadow puppet piece to reflect on stories from the uprising in the Twin Cities.

Ty Chapman is a multiracial author, poet and puppeteer of Nigerian and European descent. He has been creating art with social justice themes in the Twin Cities for many years, and is passionate about creating art that speaks to the Black experience in America. Lately, Ty has focused on editing his children's books, refining his collection of poetry, and performing his one-man shadow puppet show online.

Andrew Young (he/they) is a Taiwanese-Indonesian-American puppeteer, artist and educator based in Minneapolis. They received their puppeteer training through Monkeybear's Harmolodic workshop, a local BIPOC-centered puppetry organization, and has since worked for Mayday and Barebones as a staff artist, as well as the Full Moon Puppet Show in various roles. They have performed shows at Heart of the Beast and Open Eye Figure Theater, were a part of the inaugural cohort of "Our Space is Spoken For," and are an educator at Mia. As a part of their work, Andrew is interested in collaboration and community building, exploring the natural world, and aiming light toward mental health and our inner worlds. Lately they have been examining what it means to be a POC artist, and what role artists have, in the midst of a pandemic and a global uprising that began in the city they call home.

Rebekah Crisanta de Ybarra (enrolled Maya-Lenca tribal citizen, El Salvador) is a Twin Cities-based contemporary artist and musician (Lady Xøk) whose [work](#) is rooted in Latinx Indigenous futurisms. Her interdisciplinary social practice (visual art, music, theatre, dance, literature,

puppetry and public art) often speaks from a perspective of Liberation Theology about interconnectedness, shared, and erased histories of the Americas.

PENUMBRA THEATRE

Concept: Penumbra company member Hannibal Lokumbe is composing an original score for a video that we are making in tribute to George Floyd and all of the victims of state sanctioned violence. Sarah Bellamy wrote the narrative and she and Lou Bellamy provided the voice-overs. Penumbra has also invited members of its racial healing artist institute to contribute (up to twenty different artists), sharing brief statements about what kind of a world they dream of, imagining into a brighter future.

Hannibal Lokumbe is a classic composer and jazz trumpeter Hannibal Lokumbe (né Marvin Peterson) has been celebrating and commemorating the African-American experience through music and words for over four decades. His work has been commissioned and performed by symphonies and orchestras across the country, including The Philadelphia Chamber Orchestra (“Can you hear God Crying?” conducted by Dirk Brossé, 2012), The Detroit Symphony Orchestra (“Dear Mrs. Parks,” conducted by Thomas Wilkins, 2005) and The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra (“God, Mississippi and a Man Called Evers” conducted by Dr. Leslie Dunner, 2002).

Lokumbe’s piece “One Land, One River, One People” was performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra under the direction of Yannick Nézet-Séguin during the winter of 2014, and during the fall of 2015. He is the founder and director of the Music Liberation Orchestra, a program that teaches music, genealogy and writing to incarcerated men around the country.

SOOMAAL HOUSE OF ART

Concept: For this initiative Soomaal has invited four artists to share their most recent and exciting creative work with the public. Soomaal House of Art is a Minneapolis-based Somali artists’ collective supporting a growing number of emerging and established Somali artists living in Minnesota and beyond. The artwork will be painted on canvas.

The four artists represented in this initiative are **Khadijah Muse, Kaamil A. Haider, Mohamed Samatar** and **Mohamud Mumin**. These artists bring a wide range of perspectives via their art practice, using various media such as painting, photography, sculpture, participatory and site-specific installations.

TRUARTSPEAKS

Concept: TruArtSpeaks will highlight the work of dancer Herb Johnson III and ceramicist Gabrielle Samone.

Herb Johnson III, AKA JDot Tight Eyez is a dancer, McKnight Fellow and graduate from Perpich Center for the Performing Arts. For three years, he studied at the Lundstrum Center for Arts and now works at the University of Minnesota as an Urban & Street dance instructor. He currently choreographs and performs solo and in groups 612 Crew, DeadPool, and Mixtape. Professional work includes iLuminate from America's Got Talent, Choreographing G-Easy's Halftime show 2018, and Super Bowl 52 half-time Show 2018 with Justin Timberlake.

Gabrielle Samone is an artist, visionary, facilitator and participant of growth, perspective shifts and intentional responses to social and political change. With a strong focus on the exploration, documentation & claiming of cultural and historic identities, her work is filled with robust imagery, narrative and the essence of her spiritual existence.

WALKER WEST

Concept: Musician William E. Duncan will compose and record a song for this project.

William E. Duncan is a musician, educator and composer, who shares a fragment, but dynamic portion of his God-inspired music with the Twin Cities. As a Motown native, William grew up surrounded by music and talented musicians. He's taught and worked with some of the greatest gospel artists in the country including the late Mattie Moss-Clark and her daughters, The Clark Sisters, Byron Cage, Fred Hammond, J Moss, The Winans, the late Donald Vails and Thomas Whitfield. Currently, he serves as the minister of music for The Purpose Church in Minneapolis and teaches piano, organ and voice at Walker West Music Academy in Saint Paul. Some of the many Twin Cities artists he's worked with include James Gear & Company, Ginger Commodore, Robert Robinson, Dr. Mambo's Combo and his beloved sister, Debbie Duncan.